

Adaptation of Magruder's American Government, 2005 Edition

A Tour of the U.S. Constitution

Amendments XI through XIX

1. What is the major content of the 11th Amendment?

Essentially the **11th Amendment** (enacted in **1798**) forbids a citizen of one state may sue--in federal court--another State.

2. What is the major content of the 12th Amendment?

The **12th Amendment** (enacted in **1804**) establishes separate elections in the Electoral College for the President and Vice President.

The original process for electing the President and Vice President was quite complex. In short, the person with the second-most electoral votes would become V.P. while the one with the most would be President.

But the **12th Amendment** established that separate ballots be cast for President and Vice President by members of the Electoral College.

The **12th Amendment** also established a process by which electoral votes were processed and counted, along with the procedure by which the House of Representatives should elect the President if the Electoral College did not award any candidate a majority of the electoral votes.

3. What is the major content of the 13th Amendment?

The **13th Amendment** (enacted in **1865**) outlaws slavery in the United States of America. It also bans involuntary servitude (except as a punishment for crime) throughout the United States of America.

The **13th Amendment** is one of the major outcomes of the Northern victory in the American Civil War.

4. What is the major content of the 14th Amendment?

The **14th Amendment (enacted in 1868)** declares that all persons born in the U.S. are citizens. This cleared up the issue as to whether the newly freed slaves were citizens. Per the 14th Amendment, former slaves were citizens.

The **14th Amendment** declares that no State can make or enforce any law that denies or minimizing the rights citizens enjoy as citizens. States cannot deny a person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor can states deny a person the equal protection of the laws.

The 14th Amendment has three other sections, but for our purposes in this course, you will only be held accountable for the content in Section 1 (the content summarized above) of the 14th Amendment.

5. What is the major content of the 15th Amendment?

The **15th Amendment (enacted in 1870)** declares that the right to vote cannot be denied or minimized because of a person's race, color, or previous status as a slave (servitude).

Notice that the 15th Amendment makes it illegal to keep someone from voting on account of their race/color. But it does not say anything about making it virtually impossible to register to vote.

In the years after the passage of the 15th Amendment, Southern states like Alabama and Mississippi used poll taxes, literacy tests, and other such devices to make it extremely difficult for African-Americans to register to vote. Hence, since Blacks could not register, they could not vote.

Parts of the Civil Rights struggle in the 1950s and 1960s focused on securing voting rights for Black Americans in Southern States like Alabama.

6. Together, what are the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments known as?

The Civil Rights amendments

7. What is the major content of the 16th Amendment?

The **16th Amendment (enacted in 1913)** allows the federal government to enact and collect taxes on incomes from whatever sources it deems fit. Also, it allows income taxes to be levied without any regard to whether some States end up paying proportionally more.

8. What is the major content of the 17th Amendment?

The **17th Amendment (enacted in 1913)** requires that U.S. Senators (2 per State) be elected directly by the people (the voters). Prior to 17th Amendment, U.S. Senators were elected by the various state legislatures.

9. What is the basic content of the 18th Amendment?

The **18th Amendment (enacted 1919)** banned the making of, the transportation of, and the selling of alcoholic beverages. The 18th Amendment went into effect one year after the ratification of the amendment. This is known as the **Prohibition Amendment**.

Oddly enough, the 18th Amendment did not outlaw drinking alcohol per se. If someone had liquor in the cabinet that was purchased prior to Prohibition, then one could drink it.

The 18th Amendment is no longer in effect. The **21st Amendment (enacted in 1933)** repealed the **18th Amendment**, and the matter to be wet (legalized liquor) or dry (prohibition) would be decided on a state-by-state basis.

Currently, no State is dry. But there are some dry counties scattered throughout the U.S. Alabama is notorious for having dry counties.

10. What is the major content of the 19th Amendment?

The **19th Amendment (enacted in 1920)** declares that the right to vote cannot be denied to someone on account of his or her sex.

The 19th Amendment granted the suffrage (the right to vote) to women in all of the states.

11. Taken together, the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th Amendments can be known as what?

The Progressive Amendments